

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 00464 131801Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EB-07 SIL-01 LAB-04 COME-00 INT-05 /077 W

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R 131615Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8646

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMCONSUL MUNICH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UR

SUBJECT: DONETSK PARTY COMMITTEE PURGED

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. DONETSKAYA OBLAST PARTY COMMITTEE WAS PURGED AT JANUARY 10-11 PARTY CONFERENCE SUPERVISED BY V.V. SHCHERBITSKIY, UKRAINIAN PARTY BOSS AND MEMBER OF CPSU POLITBURO. FORMER FIRST SECRETARY V.I. DEGTAREV WAS REMOVED AT PLENUM ON EVE OF OBLAST CONFERENCE, AND HE WAS STRONGLY CRITICIZED IN PRAVDA AND PRAVDA UKRAINY, THE UKRAINIAN REPUBLIC NEWSPAPER, ON JANUARY 11. DEGTAREV IS THE FIRST IMPORTANT OBLAST SECRETARY TO BE PURGED IN PRE-CONGRESS ELECTIONS CYCLE. SHCHERBITSKIY OUTLINED SERIOUS SHORTFALLS IN COAL AND STEEL INDUSTRY IN DONETSKAYA OBLAST, AND FORMER LEADERSHIP WAS ACCUSED OF PROTECTING POLITICAL ASSOCIATES FROM PENALTIES FOR FAILURES. NEW DONETSKAYA OBLAST LEADER IS B.V. KACHURA WHO SHOULD RECEIVE FULL MEMBERSHIP ON CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE AT 25TH PARTY CONGRESS. IN ADDITION TO PURGE OF DONETSK LEADERS FOR ECONOMIC SHORTCOMINGS, AFFAIR SMACKS OF REGIONAL POLITICAL RIVALRY. SHCHERBITSKIY PROBABLY BENEFITS RELATIVELY FROM PURGE OF DONETSK PARTY MACHINE, BUT PROMOTION OF KACHURA FROM SECOND TO FIRST SECRETARY MAY INDICATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 00464 131801Z

LIMITED NATURE OF THE VICTORY. END SUMMARY.

2. PRAVDA GAVE ON JANUARY 11 UNUSUALLY LONG AND CRITICAL ACCOUNT OF DONETSKAYA OBLAST PARTY CONFERENCE. FORMER FIRST SECRETARY V.I. DEGTAREV WAS ACCUSED OF PROTECTING POLITICAL ASSOCIATES WHO VIOLATED PARTY AND STATE DISCIPLINE. SPEECH OF V.V. SHCHERBITSKIY, PUBLISHED IN PRAVDA UKRAINY JANUARY 11, INDICATED THAT DEGTAREV'S COLLEAGUES WERE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR SERIOUS SHORTCOMINGS IN COAL MINING AND IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY IN THE OBLAST, AS WELL AS FOR MANY OTHER DEFICIENCIES. DEGTAREV HIMSELF HAD BEEN REMOVED AT AN OBLAST PARTY PLENUM HELD ON JANUARY 6 AND CERTAINLY WILL LOSE HIS MEMBERSHIP ON THE CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE. AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF DECEMBER 26 THAT HE HAD BEEN NAMED CHAIRMAN OF THE UKRAINIAN STATE COMMITTEE FOR MINING AND INDUSTRIAL SAFETY SIGNALLED HIS FALL FROM POWER.

3. AMONG DEGTAREV'S ASSOCIATES WHO WERE CRITICIZED ARE-COMMITTEE; P.A. PONOMAREV, FORMERLY OBKOM SECRETARY FOR AGITPROP; G.F. KOBETSK, FORMERLY HEAD OF THE AGITPROP SECTION OF THE OBKOM SECRETARIAT WHO WAS EXPELLED FROM THE PARTY FOR SUPPRESSION OF CRITICISM IN THE PRESS; K.P. GOLOVKO, POST UNKNOWN. UKRAINIAN MINISTER OF FERROUS METALLURGY YA. P. KULIKOV WAS CRITICIZED IN THE PRAVDA ACCOUNT WHICH, ODDLY, UNDERPLAYED SHCHERBITSKIY'S CRITICISM OF THE COAL MINING INDUSTRY AND MINISTER KOLESOV.

4. SHCHERBITSKIY ALSO TOUCHED UPON THE GROWING PROBLEM OF A LABOR SHORTAGE. IN HIS FOREIGN AFFAIRS PARAGRAPH, HE REPEATED VERBATIM THE WARNING AGAINST DANGEROUS ACTIONS OF AGGRESSIVE IMPERIALISTS, DESPITE DETENTE, WHICH HE MADE IN HIS SPEECH OF DECEMBER 26 AT THE L'VOV PARTY CONFERENCE.

5. COMMENT: THE PURGE OF THE DONETSK PARTY MACHINE WAS THOROUGH AND IS THE MOST STRIKING LOCAL CHANGE YET REPORTED IN THE PRECONGRESS CYCLE OF PARTY ELECTIONS. DEGTAREV IS THE FIRST IMPORTANT OBLAST SECRETARY TO BE PURGED IN THE CURRENT PARTY ELECTIONS. WE ARE INCLINED TO VIEW THE DISGRACE OF DEGTAREV AND ASSOCIATES AS ANOTHER EPISODE IN THE CHRONIC POLITICAL WARFARE AMONG VARIOUS REGIONAL POLITICAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 00464 131801Z

MACHINES IN THE UKRAINE. WE THINK THAT SHCHERBITSKIY GAINS RELATIVELY FROM THIS EPISODE, BUT THE LIMITED NATURE OF THE POLITICAL CHANGE IS INDICATED BY THE PROMOTION OF AN OFFICIAL FROM WITHIN THE DONETSK PARTY MACHINE--KACHURA, WHO HAD BEEN ZHDANOV CITY FIRST SECRETARY IN THE PAST. HAD A KNOWN POLITICAL FIGURE FROM ANOTHER GROUP OUTSIDE THE OBLAST BEEN APPOINTED FIRST SECRETARY, THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE WOULD BE GREATER AND ALSO CLEARER.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL PARTIES, PARTY ORGANIZATION, COMMUNISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MOSCOW00464
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760012-1001
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760163/aaaacdjy.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 APR 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <27 APR 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DONETSK PARTY COMMITTEE PURGED
TAGS: PINT, UR, DONETSKAYA OBLAST, (SHCHERBITSKIY, V V), (KACHURA, B V)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006